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Daily Reviews of the Syrian Press

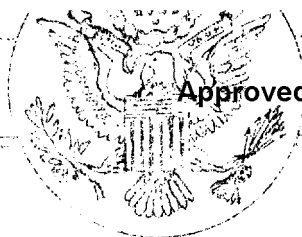
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AMERICAN LEGATION

= DAMASCUS =

Daily Review of the Syrian Press

The following is an informal digest of material from the local Arabic Press, and is in no way to be considered as an official translation. It should not be quoted nor attributed to the Legation.

No. 49

(FOR STAFF USE ONLY)

PRESS DIGEST, TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 1949.

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NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alif Ba', Al Nasr, Al Fayha', Al Balad, Al Manar,
Al Alam, Barada, Al Nazir, Al Shabab, Al Duha',
Al Jabal, Al Insha', Al Kifah, Al Qabas, Al Ayyam,
and Al Sha'b.

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ECONOMIC AFFAIRS.

UJAYLI'S LECTURE ON TAPLINE:

Al Sha'b: Raqqa Deputy 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ujayli gave a lecture on Sunday (March 13) evening at the Arab Club on the "Tapline Agreement". 'Ujayli started by saying that he would only discuss the question from the economic point of view because his opposition to the agreement is purely economic. He, however, admitted that the Tapline Agreement was far better off than that of the IPC, which gives Syria a benefit of only LS. 284. He then listed seven pipelines which would be extended through Syria during the coming eight years, among which the 16-in Tapline which stretches along the line Raqib-Huran-Sidon, and which has a daily output of 160,000 barrels.

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(Pr. Dig. 49/2)

The lecturer then went on to say: If Syria refuses to grant the concession, the Company will have to choose one of the three following alternatives.

1. The sea route, Raqib-Tannura-Port Sa'id-Suez Canal, where the Canal collects 16 cents on every barrel, thereby raising the expenses of transportation to 40 cents per barrel.
2. The route Raqib-Port Sa'id-Suez Canal, which will cost the company 31 cents a barrel.
3. The route Raqib-Mediterranean-Aqaba without passing through the Suez Canal, which will cost the company 28 cents a barrel.

But, if the pipes are extended through Syria, the cost of transporting one barrel will be only 19 cents and perhaps as little as 15 cents if the whole capacity of the pipes is used. This shows that the Company will save an amount of at least 13 cents on every barrel.

If Syria takes only four of the 13 cents our share will be \$ 11,000,000. and if we take seven our share will be \$ 20,000,000; and still the Tapline expenses will be greatly cut down.

The 200,000 tons of petroleum which the Company undertakes to sell us at Persian Gulf prices constitute a queer source of gain to the Company, for it will thereby gain \$2,700,000.

'Ujayli then went on to say: The Company has negotiated with King 'Abdallah, in his capacity as future King of Palestine, the extension of pipelines through Palestine. This is confirmed by the future King's declarations that he will defend Gaza with all possible strength. Perhaps the extension of pipelines is the reason, and not the sanctity of the bones of his ancestors who are buried there.

If it may be thought that the Company will resort to the Jews for the extension of their lines through Israel. But, in addition to King Ibn Sa'ud's opposition, the Jews will endeavor to make the most out of it. If it was possible for the Company to agree with the Jews, it would not have come to us.

It is

It is to be noted that the extension through our Country of the other pipelines will depend on the terms of the Tapline Agreement. The Anglo-Iranian is already negotiating on the basis of the Tapline. So if we consent to the agreement as it is now, we will have no chance of getting better conditions, and greater benefits from other companies.

For all these reasons, I urge the rejection of the Agreement, in its present text, for it implies very great economic loss to us.

The lecture was then set for discussion. 'Ujayli said the following in reply to questions of his audience:

He could get no information on the agreement from official sources. The figures he mentioned in his lecture were given him by Mr. Manhal, the American millionaire of Syrian origin.

It is possible for the country to keep the question pending, but the Company cannot wait. It has to supply the petroleum requirements of the world at the soonest possible.

The expenses incurred in extracting a barrell of petroleum in America is \$ 2.50, while in Hijaz the expenses are only \$1.

Al Nasr: In reference to the lecture and discussion said that the audience were unanimous that no political danger is implied in the Agreement and that the economic benefits for the State Treasury do not conform with the hugeness of the project.

TAPLINE AND MONETARY AGREEMENTS:

Alif Ba: The Parliament's Financial Committee has continued the consideration of the Tapline and the Franco-Syrian Monetary Agreements in the presence of ministers of Finance and National Economy.

PROTECTION OF SYRIAN TRADE URGED:

Al Nidal: In view of the bitter competition arising from the import of foreign goods and the arrival of many foreign companies agents in Syria to ensure market for their products, the Chamber of Commerce has presented a request to the

Ministry

(Fr. Dig. 49/4)

Ministry of National Economy asking for the enactment of special laws and regulations to govern trade. The Chamber also draws the attention of the Ministry that some foreign institutions take the form of trade firms and send to Syria their salesmen and agents to conduct activities altogether different from the alleged nature of their duties.

The National Economy has given this subject its utmost concern and has referred the matter to the competent authorities for consideration and report.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

JEWISH ESCAPEES LISTED:

Alif Ba': In conjunction with the 'ital Statistics Department, the Syrian Security has prepared lists of names of the Jews who have escaped to Palestine, and particularly of those who are in military age.

PRESIDENT'S INDISPOSITION:

Alif Ba': A slight indisposition in health has befallen on the President of the Republic from exhaustion in work and concern over various patriotic affairs.

DISTURBANCES IN ALEPPO:

Alif Ba': A number of students interviewed the Muhafiz of Aleppo and requested the release of their friends from detention. The Muhafiz consented and ordered their release after having informed them that any gathering or demonstration will be dispersed forcibly by the Government.

AMIR ABD-AL-KARIM'S SON ENLISTED:

Barada: Although the Syrian Laws do not provide for the employment of non-Syrians in the State offices, the son of Amir Abd-al-Karim, the Prince of al-Riff, has been considered of "Arab" Nationality and employed by a decree as Lieutenant in the Syrian Army.

COMMUNIST

to the main streets.

A meeting

A meeting was held (March 13) at Government House in the presence of the Minister of Public Works and attended by the Muhafiz, employers and laborers to discuss the labor disputes. The employers insisted that the Labor Union be dissolved, or at least have its Chief changed, that a guarantee be given to the employers by the Union, that all laborers be considered discharged from their work having gone on illegal strike, and that they start new employment henceforth. On the other hand, the laborers insisted that their detained colleagues be released without a deposit. The meeting was adjourned with no results.

Another meeting was held at 3 p.m. in the presence of the Minister and was attended by the Muhafiz, Chief of the Federation of Labor Unions, Chief of the Textile Labor Union, and representatives of the employers. The Muhafiz insisted on keeping the detained laborers in arrest until a guarantee is given. The employers insisted on their viewpoints.

On leaving the meeting place, inimical shouts were heard against the employers which created a strain atmosphere. The employers notified the Muhafiz that they would not attend the meeting scheduled for 5 p.m.

ARAB AFFAIRS

BUNCHE'S ASSISTANTS IN DAMASCUS:

Al Nasr: General Riley accompanied by Henry Vigier, Bunche's special advisor, and a French Officer in the rank of a Colonel arrived in Damascus by plane at 10:00 a.m. March 14, 1949.

After an hour-and half meeting at the Foreign Office General Riley told the press that he discussed with Prime Minister Khalid Bey the invitation extended to Syria by Dr. Bunche. According to the General, the present talks between the Jews and the Lebanese at Naqura were also discussed in general terms.

A Foreign Office spokesman stated that Syria is not compelled to hurry in accepting Dr. Bunche's invitation, because its situation is different from that of other Arab States .

F.GH/JSS/aet.



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AMERICAN LEGATION

= DAMASCUS =

Daily Review of the Syrian Press

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No. 49

(FOR STAFF USE ONLY)

PRESS DIGEST, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 1949.

NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alif Ba', Al Nasr, Al Fayha', Al Baled, Al Manar,
Al Alam, Barada, Al Nazir, Al Shabab, Al Duha,
Al Jabal, Al Insha', al Kifah, Al Jabas, Al Ayyam,
and al Sha'b.

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ARAB AFFAIRS.

PARLIAMENT'S CLOSED MEETING:

Barada: At the request of the Prime Minister in the Parliament meeting yesterday, the audience, and the press reporters had been asked to leave for a closed meeting. We learn that the Prime Minister made a statement on the developments of the Palestinian question in both military

and

(Pr. Dig. 49/2)

and political points of view. In conclusion he expressed to the deputies his Government's policy and intentions to enter military negotiations with the Jews, and to accept the invitation extended by the three-member Conciliation Committee to the Conference scheduled to be held in Beirut.

The Prime Minister then replied to many questions posed to him by the deputies and explained to them in detail many subjects.

NEGOTIATIONS ACCEPTED PRINCIPALLY:

Al Sha'b: An official spokesman of the Government stated late last night (Mar. 14) that at its monday meeting the Council of Ministers discussed the invitation to Rhodes and accepted it in principle. There are no indications whether or not the Government has transmitted this acceptance to Dr. Bunche in writing.

It seems that the Government has changed its attitude following the arrival of Gen. Riley and Mr. Vigier and their interview with Prime Minister Khalid al-'Azam.

ARAB LEAGUE MEETING:

Al Babas: A Foreign Office Spokesman declared that the Arab League Council Session is scheduled for March 17, 1949 and that the representative of Arab states in Cairo will represent their Governments in this Session.

EXCHANGE OF PWs:

Al 'Alam: Mr. Monier, the representative of the International Red Cross Society, will meet Dr. Ibrahim al-Ustuwani, the Director of the Political Affairs, to discuss with him the exchange of Syrian and Jewish Prisoners of War.

ARABIAN AID TO REFUGEES:

Al Balad: H.R.H. the King of Sa'udi Arabi, has presented a quantity of clothes to be distributed to the refugees.

The Sa'udi

The Sa'udi Arabian Legation in Damascus distributed these gifts to the refugees in Douma on Thursday last (Mar.10) The Women's Branch of the Palestine Liberation Committee expresses in this paper its gratitude and appreciation of this generous act.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS -----

MONETARY AND TAPLINE AGREEMENTS:

Al Sha'b: The Parliamentary Economic Committee has held another meeting for the consideration of the Franco-Syrian Monetary Agreement and for listening to the explanations of the Finance Minister. The last meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 1949 when the Committee will give its final opinion on the Government's recommendation. There is no likelihood that the Agreement will be raised in Parliament shortly.

The Committee has not yet taken firm stand on the Tapline question as it still requires documentary proofs and studies of the agreement from the Government.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. -----

A LIKELY CRISIS NECESSITATES THE STAY OF KHURI IN SYRIA?

Al Sha'b: Rumors spread yesterday have it that Faris Bey al-Khuri might possibly give up his plan of departing to Lake Success to preside the Syrian Delegation to UN General Assembly and to personally attend the International Judicial Committee meeting of which he is a member, in order to use his influence to solve the crisis which will likely take place in the Cabinet.

Rumors further go on to state that Farid Zayn al-Din, the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry will possibly represent Syria in the UN General Assembly.

BAKRI'S

(Pr. Dig. 49/4)

BAKRI'S ALLEGIANCE TO PEOPLE'S PARTY:

Al Sha'b: Deputy of Damascus Nasib al-Bakri labels in a statement published in this paper the news reported in the Northern Region papers about having withdrawn from the People's Party as unfounded. He declares his allegiance and devotion to the Party and its principles.

INDIA OFFERS 200 POUNDS PER TON OF WHEAT:

Al 'Alam: From the Government's envoy to India to offer sale of Syrian wheat, a cable has been received to the effect that India offers only 200 Pounds Syrian per ton of wheat SIP New Delhi. This would mean that the Government which pays 350 Pounds per ton has to sell the ton at 150 Pounds to India taking into consideration freight expenses.

MILITARY ATTACHE IN FOREIGN SERVICE:

Alif Ba': The Ministry of Defense has taken a decision to appoint senior Army Officers as Military Attachés in the Syrian Legation abroad. A bill regarding allowances to be granted to such attachés has been submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval and reference to Parliament for ratification.

P.A.A. WIRELESS STATIONS IN SYRIA:

Al Nidal: The Pan American World Airways has petitioned the Government for a permission to establish in Syria two wireless stations one for receiving and the other for transmitting.

"The establishment of wireless station by each of the foreign companies in Syria to form a network of espionage cannot be in anyway tolerated", the paper writes.

F.GH/JSS/aet.



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No. 51

(FOR STAFF USE ONLY)

PRESS DIGEST, THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 1949.

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NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alif Ba', Al Nasr, Al Rayha', Al Balad, Al Manar,
Al Alam, Barada, Al Nazir, Al Shabab, Al Duha',
Al Jabal, Al Insha', Al Kifah, Al Qabas, Al Ayyam,
and Al Sha'b.

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ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

'UJAYLI'S TAPLINE LECTURE CRITICIZED (See Pr. Dig. 49/1)

Al Qabas: Editor Najib Al-Rayyis of al Qabas editorially discusses the TAPLINE Agreement in the light of the lecture by Deputy Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ujayli Sunday last. He takes note at the beginning that 'Ujayli believes there is no political danger arising from the concession, that the Syrian Treasury does not benefit much from the Tapline, that the Tapline is far better off than the IPC which gives Syria only LS. 284 a year, and that Ujayli recommends the rejection

of the

of the Agreement on the basis that it is a material loss to the country. He then goes on to argue.

While we fully agree with the respectable deputy that the Tapline constitutes no political danger threatening the independence and sovereignty of Syria, we completely reject his idea that the agreement is not greatly profitable to the Treasury and the country. We believe that this agreement, which constitutes no political danger, is even to be preferred to a political treaty with America. For that country will be compelled to support us in international policy and indirectly defend our boundaries against any foreign threat in the course of protecting its petroleum pipelines. From the economic point of view, however, we contradict Dr. 'Ujayli. We believe that material gain with respect to economic projects should not be assessed with income to the Treasury, but with the gains and prosperity they avail for the various classes of people.

It is strange that while Dr. 'Ujayli claims that the agreement gives us no economic benefits he admits frankly that it is superior to the IPC agreement which gives the treasury an annual income of LS. 284 only. Now, let us consider what achievements the IPC has rendered for the people. It has revived two towns, Homs and Tripoli, economically and socially and continues to be contributing to the prosperity of the town of Tripoli so much so that Tripoli has become a competitor to the port of Beirut. It has further been supplying the Country with the millions of pounds of rare currency for the last three years and has been the only source of hard currency. If this agreement which is considered weak by Dr. 'Ujayli has achieved all those things, then the Tapline could not be compared to the IPC, for its gains to the people are immeasurably greater. It will give the State an annual income of 200,000 sterling as security and extension fees, and a permanent fee equal to one-half the fees paid to Lebanon as export and terminus fees. It will further contribute to the prosperity of all classes of the people including laborers, & contractors. Then, there are the millions of pounds worth of rare currency which will be spent yearly by the American and local officials of the Company.

Therefore, the gains arising from the Tapline agreement could not be compared to the benefits of the "weak" IPC agreement which contributed to the security and prosperity of two towns. The profits of economic projects should not be valued with the taxes and fees paid to the Government, but with the services rendered and the prosperity availed for the various classes of people.

TAPLINE

(Pr. Dig. 51/3)

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TAPLINE AND MONETARY AGREEMENT:

Al Nasr: The Economic Committee of the Parliament unanimously voted for the Franco-Syrian Monetary Agreement and charged the controller of the Committee to prepare a report to be submitted to Parliament for introduction on Saturday and voting possibly on Monday, the last meeting of the Extraordinary session.

Similarly with the Tapline agreement. It is reported that the Committee in question also voted for this agreement and charged the Controller to prepare the Committee's report for submission along with the Monetary Agreement on the same day.

It is believed that the two Agreements will be raised and fully discussed before the termination of this session, namely on Monday. The Ordinary session of the Parliament begins on Tuesday, March 22.

There are all indication that on Saturday's meeting (March 19) the Parliament will discuss the draft bill prepared by the Government regarding the decrease of bread prices in the country from 45-50 to 28-22 with the view of reducing the cost of living in Syria.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

LABOR DISTURBANCES IN ALEPPO ENDED: (Pr. Dig. 49/4)

Al Sha'b: In a joint meeting between the Employers and the textile workers in Aleppo an agreement was reached to end the strike and return to work as from next Saturday, (March 9) The Chief of the Employers Syndicate stated that "the various issues on which they had been in disagreement have been principally settled, and the workers have decided to return to their works." regarding the indemnities and the discharge of the workers, the Chief said that "they will be left for the court and the special committees to solve."

CZECH PLANES

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CZECH PLANES FLYING OVER SYRIA:

Al Sha'b: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has requested the opinion of the Public Works on the matter of prohibiting the flight of Czechoslovak Airlines Planes over the Syrian territory along with Lebanon which has already taken such an action, in view of the Company's relations with the Zionists and its existing line between Prague and Haifa for the transportation of Jewish immigrants and arms.

NATIONALIZATION OF AIRLINES COMPANY:

Al Sha'b: A draft Bill has been prepared by the Ministry of Public works and Communications regarding the nationalization of the Syrian Airways and the compensation of the shareholders. The Bill will be submitted to the Parliament immediately after its approval by the Council of Ministers.

PARLIAMENT'S CLOSED MEETING:

Al Nasr: From reliable political sources comes the information that in the Parliament's closed meeting Prime Minister Khalid al-'Azam informed the deputies of the invitation extended to Syria to Rhodes Truce Negotiations and the results of the talks conducted at Naqura between the Lebanese and the Jewish authorities, on the Syrian stand. The Prime Minister stressed to the deputies the necessity of acceptance of the invitation.

After the meeting the Prime Minister is reported to have called on the President of the Republic and discussed with him for a considerable time.

IMMIGRATION TO SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES:

Al Nasr: When asked of the truth of the news published by the press to the effect that the Syrian Foreign Ministry has taken a decision prohibiting immigration of Syrians to Brazil and Argentina as well as to other South American countries, the Prime Minister fully denied this news and labelled them as false.

POLICE

POLICE DIRECTOR'S RESIGNATION?

Al Nasr: Among informed circles a rumor was spread late last night (March 16) that the Director General of the Syrian Police, Major Mahmud al Hindi, has resigned. No confirmation of this report could be obtained.

SYRIAN MINISTER IN LONDON BACK:

Al Fayha': Dr. Najib al-Armanazi, the Syrian Minister to London, has emplaned for Damascus on March 16, 1949.

IRAQI COMMUNIST STUDENTS:

Al Fayha': In the parliament March 14 meeting the question of the deportation of all Iraqi students within 24 hours was raised. Our reporter further learned that the Director of the Syrian Police took his decision after ascertaining their communist tendencies and communist propaganda activities in the Syrian University. The Director of the Interior, Fu'ad Bey Mahasin, received a delegation of Iraqi students and instructed them that unless they prove to the Syrian Police that they are not communist, they shall not be allowed to remain in Syria.

ANOTHER INDISPOSITION:

Al Fayha': Dr. Muhsin al Barazi Minister of Public Instruction, is reported as having been confined to bed with a slight health indisposition.

A GRATITUDE:

Al Fayha': The Syrian Government has presented a letter of gratitude to Mr. Ogden, the Press Attache of the American Legation in Damascus, and the American Library Association in Washington for their valuable gift of scientific books presented to the Library of the Syrian University.

AN AMERICAN VISIT:

Barada: The "Economic Attache" at the American Legation paid a call on the Minister of National Economy to discuss with him economic affairs.

ARAB AFFAIRS

RHODES TRUCE NEGOTIATIONS:

Al Sha'b: Acting Secretary General of the Presidency 'Issam al-Inglizi is reported as having left for Beirut carrying a presidential message to President Bshara al-Khuri of Lebanon believably regarding the Syrian viewpoint toward Dr. Bunche's invitation to Rhodes truce negotiations.

On the other Al Fayha' reports that Issam al-Inglizi has attended in Beirut a meeting of the Lebanese truce delegation at the Lebanese Foreign Office. The development of the Naqura talks, the withdrawal of the Syrian Army forces stationed in Lebanese territories, and the invitation of Dr. Bunche to Rhodes Truce negotiations, were the subject of the discussions in this meeting.

The Delegation to represent Syria in the Conciliation Commission meeting at Beirut on March 21, 1949 will be composed of the following: Faris, al Khuri, Khalid al 'Azm and Farid Zayn-al-Din.

F.GH/JSS/aet.



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No. 48.

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PRESS DIGEST, MONDAY, MARCH, 14, 1949.

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NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alif Ba', Al Nasr, Al Fayha', Al Balad, Al Manar,
Al Alam, Barada, Al Nasir, Al Shabab, Al Duha',
al Jabal, Al Insha', Al Kifah, Al Labas, Al Ayyam,
and Al Sha'b.

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ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

EXPORT TO PALESTINE:

Al Ayyam: From a reliable source in the Ministry of National Economy comes the information that the Syrian and the Lebanese Governments have decided to prohibit export of agricultural products, cereals and cereal by-products to Palestine without a special permit from either Syrian or Lebanese Governments. Special proofs should be given of the destination of the export in order to prevent the smuggling of these products to the Jews of Palestine.

THE GENERATION WILL NEVER FORGIVE US RATIFYING TAFLINE:

Al Nidal: Under the above headlines Sami Kabbara, Deputy

Damascus,

Damascus, writes in his paper Al-Nidal the following:

We would like to inquire if America has changed its attitude and decided to help us to liberate Palestine when it was the cause of its loss and its delivery to the Zionists, that we are hurrying to help its companies and grant them concessions?...

Or, has it done anything in the view of elevating our position among the world nations in order to recover the prestige we had lost?

I think none of these has happened, and am confident that America continues to assist the Zionists...

But it seems the diffusion of the scent of the dollar has blinded the eyes...!...

The Tapline Company is one of those imperialistic petroleum companies... Here we are confronting the beginning of imperialism represented in the petroleum companies, foremost of which is the Tapline....

This kind of hidden imperialism is the most dangerous one ever known by the country.

It should not be forgotten that the Zionists are looking at America as their protector... The American influence has in fact established itself in 'Israel' from which it will expand toward the neighboring Arab countries to join in with their imperialistic foundations; the petroleum companies. These companies are being established in these countries to ensure Americans' footholds for the materialization of their exploitative projects.

We are sure that if the country offers to this Company this concession the coming generations will never forgive us for our generosity.

ANTI-TAPLINE EDITORIAL:

Al Sha'b: In a lengthy editorial, Salah al-Din al-Bitar, Secretary-General of the Arab Resurrection Party writes in part the following:

The Franco-Syrian Financial Agreement, the TAPLINE agreement, and the forthcoming agreements with the Anglo-Iranian and the IPC, cannot all be considered as purely financial and commercial agreements. The non-political relations mentioned in some terms of these agreements are only

a drop in the sea of other terms having clear political aims. All these agreements are only foreign and fearful concessions presented by the Government to three imperialistic countries who have agreed together through their Atlantic and Western Pacts, to include Syria and Lebanon within their spheres of influence such that the interests of any one of them would not interfere with the interests of the other two.

ANTI-TAPLINE DEMONSTRATIONS EVERYWHERE:

Al Sha'b: The Aleppo students have decided to go on strike and march in demonstrations on Saturday (March 12) in protest against the Tapline Agreement. The Tajhiz students endeavored to have the Laique students join them, but were dispersed by the Police and Gendarmerie forces. The students then met at Yusuf al-'Azmah Square but were again dispersed by the Police after a clash which led to the closing of all shops in that area. Several students and other individuals were arrested. At 12:30 the Muhafiz advised a delegation of the students who called on him to lodge a protest to present their criticisms in writing rather than in demonstrations and promised to convey all their criticisms to the competent authorities. The Muhafiz also informed them his instructions to scatter the demonstrators and to release all the detainees.

While in Homs, demonstrating students of the first and second Tajhiz were joined at the mosque by the students of the Orthodox school and marched towards the Sarail. Police efforts to disperse them went in vain. "The Tapline is a new imperialistic chain", and "Financial Agreement is recognition of a excellent position to France" were typical shouts. After speeches condemning these agreements delivered consequently by student Nazim Nassif, Lawyer Fawzi al-Safwat, Anwar Tayyara of the Resurrection Party, the demonstration was declared terminated.

The paper also publishes three cables from the Euphrates and Huran Muhafazas which express the students' disapproval of the Tapline and their strike therefore, as well as dissatisfaction of the Arab Resurrection Party in the Euphrates with the Tapline Agreement.

ORDINARY CUSTOM'S APPLICABLE TO WESTERN GERMANY:

Al Sha'b: The Syrian Ministry of National Economy has approved the demand by the British and American military authorities in Western Germany to apply the ordinary custom fees and tariffs on goods imported from the two occupation zones there.

The approval was dispatched to the Supreme Council of Common Interests to be supplemented by the Lebanese approval for the issuance of a common decision by the Council.

It is understood that the Ministry will also approve a similar demand from the American authorities in Japan

TAPLINE AND CURRENCY DISCUSSED:

Alif Ba': A group of the People's Deputies called for three hours on Finance Minister Jabbara seeking full explanation of the Tapline and currency agreements. The Minister gave them the necessary explanations, disproved the criticisms of the agreement, and detailed to them the difficulties he encountered in drafting the Currency agreement. The deputies left the Minister very thankfully.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

DISTURBING ELEMENTS IN SYRIA!

Al Nasr: A detailed report on the activities of certain elements in Syria inspired by foreign sources has been submitted to the official quarters by the competent authorities. The report deals with the extent of the activities of these disturbing elements in creating a state of confusion in the country, and the best means of combatting such activities. The report suggests the formation of special units (Police) to be entrusted with the combat of these elements and their activities.

AN APPRECIATED ACTION:

Al Nasr: In his latest visit to Aleppo to arbitrate in the Labor disputes there, the Minister of Public Works & Communications, Majd-al-Din al-Jabiri, held a meeting in the Public Library with the students and explained to them the advantages of the Tapline Agreements. A debate which lasted about one hour between the Minister and the students over this subject resulted with the Minister winning when the students has been convinced of the advantages and the profits which the country will attain from this project.

Al Nasr appreciates this action on the part of the Public Works Minister and hopes that "the example will be adopted by all other ministers dealing or deciding issues important for the future of the country."

CONTEMPORARY 'AL JABAL' ATTACKED:

Al Nasr: Availing themselves of complete darkness, heavy rainfall floods, and absence of all the typographers, a number of persons entered the printing shop of 'AL JABAL' daily newspaper published in Swayda, and set it on fire. The Muhafiz has given to this incident his utmost concern and has ordered the conduction of inquiries leading to the arrest of the attackers.

DEPUTY AQBIQ GAVE UP HIS SUIT AGAINST AL FAYHA:

Al Nasr: Deputy Muhammad Aqbiq declared in court meeting examining his suit against al Fayha' his 'giving up' of the accusation.

AVIATION AGREEMENT WITH GREECE:

Al 'Alam: The Chargé d'Affaires of the Greek Legation in Beirut arrived in Damascus and called on Dr. Ibrahim al-Ustuwani, the Director of the Political affairs of the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss with him the final draft of the Aviation Agreement between the two countries. The signature of this agreement is expected shortly.

INTERIOR MINISTER A.I.

Al Sha'b: Decrees were issued accepting the resignation of 'Adil al-'Azman, and appointing Munsin al-Barazi to act as Minister of Interior in addition to his substantive duties. The paper then quotes al Insha' as having assured its readers that the Nationalist Party would not participate in the administration in spite of its support to the present government.

AVIATION AGREEMENT WITH USA CRITICIZED:

Al Sha'b: Our correspondent learns that the Government has approved the Aviation agreement with Greece. Yet no official communiqué is released to announce this agreement !

The correspondent also states that an Aviation Agreement is being contemplated with the U.S. ... and that this agreement is the same one cancelled in 1947 in

retaliation

retaliation to the US stand toward the Palestine case.

The following comment follows: It seems that the Government after signing the Tapline wants to carry a policy of indefinite cooperation and agreement with the United States, as though Israel is already established and nothing could forbid it from forgetting the American wicked past. The Government seeks to establish an American foothold in our country. Such a shift in Syrian foreign policy can never be an extemporaneous policy of a Government which styles itself as one of 'neutral experts,' for the basic democratic rules stipulate that the opinion of the people be sought before any such shift is contemplated.

NEWSWEEK BANNED:

Al Sha'b: A decree was issued providing for the banning and confiscation of the American 'Newsweek' magazine. This banning is justified by the publication therein of anti-Arab and pro-Zionist articles.

FIRE IN ALEPPO!

Barada: Four unidentified persons called on the "Al Hawadith" paper office claiming to have to publish a denial of what had been published about the laborers. As soon as they entered the editing and radio room, they poured some fuel and gave it a match. The fire consumed a part of the office and a part of the radio.

Fire was also set to the factories of Haj Wahbi al-Hariri. The Fire Brigade succeeded to extinguish it immediately. Losses are reported to have been very little.

UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS:

Al Ayvam: Rumors had it during the visit to Syria of four Turkish MP's that the Turkish foreign Minister was expected in Damascus to talk with the Government about the Alexandretta affair and settle it for good, in return for which Turkey would use its good offices to annex Galilee to Syria. The Turkish Minister Plenipotentiary in Syria authorized us to categorically deny these rumors, as being totally unfounded.

STUDENTS

STUDENTS VISIT THE FRONT:

Al Fayha': A group of male and female students of the Syrian University proceeded Friday (March 11) to visit the Syrian Army in the front. At Qunaytra they were received by the Qaimmaqam. They were guests of the Syrian army the whole day, enjoying the company of the officers and their mingling with the soldiers. The students were astonished at the military law and the strong defense measures. Greatly affected by army life, some of them expressed their wish to join the army during the summer holidays.

On arriving back in Damascus, the dispatched cables of appreciation to each of H.E. the President, and to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Armed Forces.

COMMUNIST METHODS:

Al Qabas: In a 2-column article, Editor Najib Rayyis condemns the encouragement by the People's Party's deputies of the Students and laborers to strike as being tactics similar to those which overthrew democratic governments in the Balkans and established a Communist coup d'état. The writer then expresses his dissatisfaction with the fiery speeches of the deputies in Parliament accusing of bribery and spying those who agree to the abandonment of political and economic isolation policy. No sooner had governments in the Balkan, Rayyis continues, sympathetic with the West been deposed than Communism prevailed on the basis of accusations, chaos, riots and strikes. This is exactly what the People's Party is calling for in the house and in their paper using these tactics which are only preparatory to the Communist coup.

ARAB AFFAIRS

SUCCESS OF BARAZI'S MISSION IN CAIRO:

Al Kifah: We do not reveal a secret by stating that Barazi's mission in Cairo has been very successful. Muhsin Bey has been kind to tell our representative about his mission that he first visited his friend, Sanhuri Pasha and later both visited the new Minister of Public Instruction, 'Ali Ayub Bey who showed every preparedness to facilitate Barazi's mission. Our Minister availed himself of the opportunity of

his presence

his presence in Cairo and visited the Prime Minister, 'Abdul Hadi Pasha, an old friend of his, and 'Azzam Pasha and other statesmen. H.M. King Faruq has been very kind to our Minister when he received him at his palace. Undoubtedly, these visits and conversations helped in improving the atmosphere and the restoration of brotherly ties between Egypt and Syria. This improvement manifested in King Faruq's cable to President Quwwatli in answer to the latter's cable on the occasion of the safe return of the Faluja garrison to Egypt, which revealed Egypt's appreciation of Syria's attitude toward the Arab cause of Palestine. As a result of this improvement, agreement has been reached for the convocation of the Arab League Council to a meeting which was scheduled for the 17th instant but was later postponed until after the meeting of the Reconciliation Commission in Beirut on the 21st instant. Accordingly, it is possible now to bring to the people the good news of the improvement of the atmosphere and the return of Arab relations to normal.

THE GRAND MUFTI OF PALESTINE UNDER ARREST?...

Al Nasr: The AHC in Damascus has issued a statement labeling as false the news published by Jewish and other foreign newsagencies to the effect that the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Haj Amin al-Husayni, has been arrested by the Egyptian authorities, and that he has resorted to the help of King Ibn Sa'ud who has consented to give him refuge in Hijaz. The fact is that the Grand Mufti has been since his arrival from France in 1946, living freely in Cairo, Egypt, enjoying the hospitality of 'noble Egypt' and the sympathy of King Faruk.

SYRIA IN FORTHCOMING ARAB MEETINGS:

Al Kifah: In reply to questions posed by Al Kifah's correspondent a "great source in the State" is reported to have disclosed the following:

The Syrian Government has agreed to participate in the Beirut Conference called for by the UN Conciliation Commission and scheduled for March 21. Syria will be represented in the Conference by a cabinet Minister. The paper here predicts that Muhsin al-Barazi will probably be delegated to the conference, owing to "his wide knowledge of and experience in these affairs."

Syria will be represented on the Arab League Council's
forthcoming

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(FOR STAFF USE ONLY)

PRESS DIGEST, FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 1949.

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PAPERS REVIEWED:

Alif Ba', Al Nasr, Al Fayha', Al Balad, Al Sha'b,
Al Insha', Al 'Alam, Al Shabab, Al Ayyam, Al Qabas,
Al Nazir, Al Jabal, And Al Duha.

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DOMESTICE AFFAIRS

SUSPENSION OF STUDIES:

Alif Ba': The students of all Damascus schools held a meeting yesterday evening (Mar.10) and decided to launch a strike on Saturday in protest against TAPLINE and the Franco-Syrian Monetary Agreements.

Al Balad: The Public Instruction Ministry has consequently issued the following three communiqués regarding the suspension of studies in all schools:

"1- The Syrian University Board has decided to suspend studies in the University and the Normal Schools for an indefinite period."

"2- In compliance with the suggestion of the Board of Directors of the Intermediary schools, and the Female Normal School, it has been decided to suspend the studies in the Secondary and Intermediary schools until Friday 10, 1949."

"3-

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"3- In the meeting held this morning, March 10, 1949, by the Directors of all the secondary schools of the Public Instructions Ministry, a decision was passed to suspend studies in all secondary, private, and foreign institutions from March 11, until March 18, 1949."

Alif Ba': Unsatisfied with the Government's suspension of studies, the students have decided to present petitions of protest to the Parliament, the Council of Ministers, and to the Ministry of Public Instruction.

ARRIVALS IN DAMASCUS:

1. Alif Ba': News received by mid-night indicate the arrival of Public Instruction minister Muhsin Bey al-Barazi from Cairo. He is reported to have immediately called on the President and met him for approximately one hour in the presence of Prime Minister Khalid al-'Azam.
2. Former Minister of Finance Edmond Bursi has returned from his official trip to England envoid by the President of the Republic.

CENSUS OF COMPANIES IN SYRIA:

Al Fayha': Statistics of the number of companies operating in Syria, prepared by the Directorate of Control of Concessionary companies, give the following results:

74 Syrian national companies, 135 Foreign corporations, & 95 foreign insurance companies. Special measures are being taken to enforce upon the foreign companies Syrian regulations, particularly the Labor Law which stipulates the employment of Syrians.

SYRIAN CHARGE AT BERN CALLED:

Al Nosr': The Syrian Chargé d'Affaires in Bern, Belgium, Dr. Khalid Shatila, has been called by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr. Shatila has arrived in Damascus March 10. He is expected to be charged with a position in the Central office of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

BERN

(Pr.Dig.47/3)

LABOR DISTURBANCES IN ALEPPO (See Pr.Dig.46/6)

Al Sha'b: The Aleppo Textile Workers postponed today (Mar.10) their demonstrations following a telephone call from the Chief of the Labor Unions in Damascus advising postponement until the return of their delegation from Damascus. On the other hand, the Judge Examiner in Aleppo ordered the release of 'Abd-al-Razzaq Qunbaz, the Chief of the Mechanical Loom Industry, whose arrest was the cause of the present demonstrations, and the cause of the detention of 70 other workers. The Government has delegated Minister of P.W. Jabiri to Aleppo reconcile the two parties: the employers and the workers.

WONDER WHO HE IS?...

Alif Ba': Inquiry into a fraud committed in the Land Registration Department by altering the dates of a Title Deed has revealed that the official accused of this action is presently an officer in the Police Force. Our reporter informs that he is today under arrest pending court trial.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

PORT OF LATTAQIA:

Al Naar: A Lattaqia delegation on a visit to Damascus/^{to} urge the establishment of a port in Lattaqia has visited the Ministers of Finance, National Economy, and Public Works & Communications. In reply to their demands, the Finance Minister Hasan Jabbara, told them that he personally supports the idea of establishing a Syrian Port in Lattaqia but "the country's financial situation does not permit the Government to materialize this at the present." Nevertheless, he promised to "allocate the first loyalty received from TAPLINE -should the Agreement be ratified- for the materialization of this project."

National Economy Minister, Hunayn Sahnawi, also supported their demands and assured them that he would "follow up" the matter even if the inhabitants of Lattaqia "give it up,"

Mr. Majd-al-Din al-Jabiri, the Minister of Public Works and Communications said that "the Ministry and himself forming a technical body is prepared to carry out the project as soon as the funds become available. He also promised to collaborate with his colleagues to find the funds.

When ...

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When funds were blamed to be the sole reason for delay, a financier among the members of the delegation offered to place at once the funds necessary for the preliminary works of the project if the Government guarantees to pay back by the end of each year a part of the sum spent on the project. Additionally a sum of 12 million Pounds Syrian has been offered by the merchants of Aleppo and Lattaqia to the Government in the form of a loan. The Finance Minister promised to raise the subject at the Council of Ministers meeting.

ALWAYS T A P L I N E !....

Na'im Antaki Refutes:

Al Sha'b: This paper along with other Damascus papers published today the text of a statement by Na'im Antaki expressing astonishment for having been the subject of criticism by three deputies in the last meeting of Parliament. Antaki states that he has no governmental or parliamentary capacity, that he does not belong to any political party, that he had renounced politics after the last parliamentary elections, that he did not negotiate for TAPLINE when he was Minister or Deputy, that his connection with Tapline only started after the ratification of the agreement by the Syrian Government, that he has been only concerned with the legal negotiations of the Tapline, that he is not one of those who buys or sells conscience, and that to his knowledge, Tapline only demands a positive or negative answer from the Chamber of Deputies as dictated by the country's interests.

U.S. Petroleum Policy (See Pr.Dig.46/7)

Deputy Rifq-Allah Antaki (P) continued today his articles in al-Sha'b about Tapline and its close connections with the American Government. He argues that the advertisements inserted by the Tapline in certain Syrian newspapers (the Aleppo papers) aim at inducing public opinion, subsequent to the painful events of Palestine and the US attitude toward the Arabs, that the Company is merely a commercial one, belonging to no political party or group, and does not act neither as an official or un-official agent to any government, American or non.

Antaki reiterates his claims stated in his former article, to the effect that Tapline is not as claimed a pure commercial company but an institution created by the US Government in the form of a commercial company to implement its economic and political policy in the Middle East.

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The insistence of having the contract provide for exemption of fees and taxes, the unrestricted right to use Syrian lands, the establishment of railways, tramways, etc., the right to extend its lines wherever it wants, namely in all parts of Syria if the American policy thus dictates, the right to build and maintain more than one harbor along the Syrian shores and the right to supervise these harbors and authorize entry or approach to these harbors, do not convince us of the pure commercial aspect of this Company. Tapline with its own administration, air and sea fleets, and small army constitutes a state within our state, or in other words limitation of the sovereignty of an independent State.

ARAB AFFAIRS

SYRIAN REPLY TO BUNCHE'S INVITATION:

ALIF Da'ir: In conjunction with Dr. Ibrahim al-Ustuwani, the Director of the Political affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary General Dr. Farid Zayn-al-Din has prepared the Syrian reply to Dr. Bunche's invitation to Rhodes Conference. The composition of the reply-note has been approved by the Prime Minister

A Foreign Office spokesman labels as unfounded the allegations reported by the Syrian press that Syria has rejected Dr. Bunche's invitation. Competent authorities are still considering the invitation, the spokesman added.

GRAND MUFTI OF PALESTINE EXPECTED IN DAMASCUS:

Al Balad: The Grand Mufti of Palestine, Haj Amin al-Husayni is expected in Damascus by plane from Cairo.

The Grand Mufti will conduct talks with the competent authorities on the subject of the refugees in preparation for the meeting of the Arabs with the Conciliation Commission in Beirut on March 21, 1949.

ARAB LEAGUE'S INTEREST IN REFUGEES:

Al Akhbar: The Secretary of the AL's Political Section, Mr. Qays-al-Din al-Rifa'i, has arrived in Damascus on an official mission of studying the present condition of the refugees.

P.GE/JSS/jss

